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615 is adjudged to have lost the case, and judgment is delivered forthwith. The winning party, for all the friends are always present, immediately cause their band to strike up, dancers perform and songs are sung, and every token of triumph is
● 616 exhibited. Unfortunately, however, for any supposed efficacy of the system, substitutes are allowed, and in addition to this bribery plays as important a part almost as it did in the law-courts themselves. The man whose money went farthest won his case, whether decided according to the principles of the Dhammathat or the lottery of the ordeal.

681 The punishments inflicted were sometimes very cruel, and the treatment of the prisoners occasionally savage in the extreme. In criminal cases torture was frequently applied to extort confession from the accused or evidence from the witnesses. Rich men usually suffered nothing worse than a fine. For the impecunious, sentences varied from sundry stripes with a rattan, with or without imprison-
[567] ment, to mutilation, perpetual slavery, and death. Except for debt, a man sentenced by the court to slavery became so with all his descendants for ever, and they were usually allotted to some pagoda, doomed to support life by begging as tadaungsa, or relegated to some other of the outcast classes. Death in Mandalay was almost invariably by decapitation, the agony of the condemned being occasionally prolonged by a fiendish executioner; the custom of throwing victims to be devoured by wild beasts, or trodden to death by wild elephants in the elephant-trap, was latterly wholly given up. In the provinces, however, other methods were very frequently adopted. North of the capital "crucifixion" was particularly common. The letwakat, or wakattaing, does not at all resemble the ordinary pictorial representation of the cross. It is more like a double ladder, consisting of three stout bamboos fixed upright in the ground, three bars lashed to them horizontally with canes, and over these again two cross-bars in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross. These punishment stakes were most frequently put up on the river-bank or on sandbanks in the stream, and were particularly common where the Shan and Kachin hills come down anywhere near the Irrawaddy. Sometimes the criminal was killed before he was lashed up, sometimes he was tied up

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696 Notwithstanding the severity of the treatment in the jails, the laws were really very mildly administered, and there were few whose relations could not muster up enough to secure them immunity from torture. Capital sentences were on the whole rare, except when political considerations came in. Then there was no mercy. Cattle-stealing was very severely punished, but murder could almost always be purged by a blood-bote.